

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 ISO-00 AID-01 SS-07 NSC-06 SSO-00 /022 W

----- 042020

O R 181445Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4370

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KIGALI 0878

NAIROBI/MAPUTO FOR CODEL DIGGS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (DIGGS, CHARLES C.), PFOR, US, RW

SUBJECT: RWANDAN PRESIDENT/FONMIN RECEIVE CODEL DIGGS

1. SUMMARY - DURING BRIEF BUT WELL RECEIVED VISIT TO KIGALI NOVEMBER 17 - 18, REPS DIGGS AND COLLINS HELD FRUITFUL TALKS WITH PRESIDENT AND FONMIN, WHO BOTH STRESSED RWANDA'S IDENTIFICATION WITH WEST, ITS DESPERATE NEED FOR MORE U.S. DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE, ITS GRATIFICATION OVER SECRETARY'S INITIATIVES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, AND ITS WORRIES OVER LONGER-TERM OUTLOOK FOR THAT REGION. BY BOTHERING TO VISIT KIGALI AT ALL, AND BY FORTHRIGHT EXCHANGE ON ISSUES, CODEL GAVE IMPORTANT BOOST TO U.S.-RWANDAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. CODEL CLIMAXED 18-HOUR VISIT TO KIGALI WITH EARLY MORNING CALL ON PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA AT HIS OFFICE, NOV. 18 PRESIDENT EXPRESSED DELIGHT AT VISIT BUT CONCERN THAT IT WAS TOO SHORT TO GAIN A FEEL FOR RWANDA. REPS DIGGS AND COLLINS, ASSISTED BY DR. CHALLENGER, EXPLAINED TIME CONSTRAINTS BUT ASSURED PRESIDENT THEY WOULD CARRY HIS VIEWS AND THEIR IMPRESSIONS BACK TO CONGRESSIONAL COLLEAGUES AS WELL AS TO PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER, AND THEY INVITED HABYARIMANA TO COMMENT ON BOTH BILATERAL RELATIONS AND STATE OF PLAY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

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3. BILATERAL RELATIONS WERE EXCELLENT, ACCORDING TO PRESIDENT,

AND RWANDA CONSIDERED U.S. AMONG ITS CLOSEST FRIENDS. RWANDANS APPRECIATED U.S. DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE BUT, FRANKLY, FELT OUR CONTRIBUTION FELL FAR SHORT OF RWANDAN NEEDS AND U.S. ABILITIES. U.S. POLICYMAKERS, PRESIDENT OBSERVED, SHOULD KEEP IN MIND STRONG RADICAL TENDENCIES AMONG RWANDA'S NEIGHBORS AND PRESSURES ON RWANDA TO FOLLOW SIMILAR DIRECTION. PRESIDENT HOPED U.S. WOULD TAKE ACCOUNT OF RWANDA'S "BORDERLINE" SITUATION (I.E., BETWEEN MODERATES AND RADICALS) AND HELP REINFORCE ITS MODERATING ROLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA'S FUTURE.

4. REGARDING TRENDS IN THE REGION GENERALLY, HABYARIMANA SAID RWANDA WAS GRATIFIED AND ENCOURAGED BY SECRETARY KISSINGER'S EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT PEACEFUL CHANGE IN BOTH RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA. HE BELIEVED THAT, AS RESULT, PROBLEMS IN BOTH COUNTRIES WERE ON THE WAY TO EVENTUAL SOLUTION. HE ADDED OUR EFFORTS WERE ALL THE MORE GRATIFYING BECAUSE RWANDA FELT U.S. HAD ABANDONED ITS FRIENDS IN ANGOLA WHEN GOING GOT TOUGH THERE.

5. FUTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA, HOWEVER, REMAINED A MAJOR QUESTION MARK. VORSTER SEEMED UNWILLING TO UNDERSTAND THAT RACIST POLICIES WERE NOT ONLY ODIUS TO REST OF WORLD BUT WERE A POWDER KEG SET TO EXPLODE. PRESIDENT URGED MUCH GREATER PRESSURE BY U.S. TO BRING ABOUT RAPID CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICAN RACIAL POLICIES. OTHERWISE VIOLENCE, BLOODSHED, AND EVEN MASSACRES CERTAINLY LAY AHEAD.

6. ASKED ABOUT CODEL'S EXPECTATIONS OF CHANGES IN POLICY TOWARD AFRICA UNDER CARTER ADMINISTRATION, DIGGS REFERRED OPTIMISTICALLY TO RECENT CARTER PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH PRESIDENT-ELECT STRESSED CONCERN FOR POOREST NATIONS AND INTENTION TO UPGRADE BILATERAL TIES. HE ALSO REMARKED, HOWEVER, THAT HE HAD IMPRESSION CURRENT ADMINISTRATION WAS SENSITIVE TO AFRICAN VIEWS ON ANGOLA AND WOULD NOT BLOCK ANGOLA'S ADMISSION TO UN. DIGGS ADDED HE HAD RECENTLY VISITED LUANDA - THE FIRST U.S. OFFICIAL TO BE RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT NETO- AND HAD COME AWAY CONVINCED THAT ANGOLANS WOULD WELCOME IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH U.S.

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7. CODEL WAS GIVEN SIMILAR PITCH YESTERDAY AFTERNOON BY FONMIN NSEKALIJE, DURING 90-MINUTE CONVERSATION IN HIS OFFICE. GOR IDENTIFIED CLOSELY WITH U.S. AND OTHER WESTERN FRIENDS, FONMIN SAID, AND HAD STUCK WITH US ON ISSUES CONCERNING VIETNAM, CAMBODIA, PUERTO RICO, AND ANGOLA. IT APPLAUDS OUR CURRENT EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT PEACEFUL CHANGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, BUT FEARS OUR EFFORTS MAY HAVE BEGUN TOO LATE. NSEKALIJE STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF BRINGING

STRONG PRESSURES TO BEAR ON VORSTER SOON IF VIOLENCE WAS TO BE
AVERTED.

8. FONMIN ALSO WARNED THAT CLOCK WAS RUNNING IN FAVOR OF
RADICAL EXTREMISTS IN RHODESIA. HE WAS WORRIED THAT NKOMO AND MUGABE,
UNDER PRESSURES FROM EXTREMIST ELEMENTS MIGHT BE ATTEMPTING TO
TORPEDO GENEVA TALKS. HE WARNED THAT COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AND
MILITARY SUPPORT WERE INCREASING AMONG NATIONALISTS, AND THAT THOSE
IN FAVOR OF MODERATION AND PEACEFUL CHANGE, INCLUDING RWANDA,
WERE FALLING BEHIND.

9. "EVEN THOUGH YOUR AMBASSADOR MAY NOT THINK SO," FONMIN
CONTINUED, BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH U.S. ARE GOOD. U.S. AND RWANDAN
INTERESTS CONVERGE IN MOST AREAS, BUT GOR BELIEVES WE COULD
DO MUCH MORE THAN WE ARE TO ASSIST THIS COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND GIVE MORE TANGIBLE SHAPE TO OUR POLITICAL
RELATIONS. FONMIN NOTED THAT RWANDA HAD ITS OWN PROBLEMS WITH
RADICAL STUDENTS AND POLITICIANS WHO WERE DEMANDING THAT THE
HABYARIMANA GOVERNMENT DEFINE ITSELF IN IDEOLOGICAL TERMS-
"CAPITALIST OR COMMUNIST." PRESIDENT WAS DETERMINED THAT RWANDA
WOULD ACHIEVE ITS OWN IDENTIFY, INDEPENDENT OF BOTH EXTREMES, BUT
IT DESPERATELY NEEDED ECONOMIC HELP FROM ITS FRIENDS IN
ORDER TO DO SO.

10. ASKED BY CODEL ABOUT HIS RECENT TRIP TO U.S.,
NSEKALIJE GREW EXPANSIVE ABOUT HOW IT HAD CORRECTED HIS
FALSE IMPRESSIONS OF "ARROGANT, RICH AMERICANS,"
(AND I CONFIRMED) THAT HE HAD PASSED N FAVORABLE
IMPRESSIONS TO RWANDAN PUBLIC ON HIS RETURN. HE ADDED HE
WAS DISAPPOINTED NOT TO HAVE MET THE SECRETARY OR
ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFEBE BUT SAID HIS CONSULTATIONS WITH
SEELYE AND OTHERS HAD BEEN USEFUL.

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11. CODEL ALSO HELD LONG PRESS CONFERENCE LAST EVENING,
GENEROUSLY COVERED ON BOTH RADIO AND IN NEWS BULLETIN
TODAY. IN ADDITION, THEY WERE VERY POPULAR GUESTS OF HONOR
AT RECEPTION AT RESIDENCE LAST NIGHT. MANY GUESTS THERE,
INCLUDING FONMIN AND SEVERAL OTHER CABINET MEMBERS, RECALLED
WITH NOSTALGIA DIGGS' VISIT HERE SIX YEARS AGO AND HIS SPEECH BEFORE
CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES (SINCE DISSOLVED).

12. COMMENT - BELIEVE CODEL RECEIVED GOOD PICTURE OF
UNEASINESS RWANDANS FEEL OVER THEIR RELATIONS WITH U.S.,
THEIR DISTINCTLY MODERATE ROLE IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS, AND
THEIR FAILURE TO OBTAIN THE ECONOMIC BACKING THEY FEEL THEY
MERIT AS AMONG OUR MOST IMPOVERISHED FRIENDS. IN RETURN,
MERELY BY HAVING MADE THE ONLY TWO CODEL VISITS TO KIGALI
IN LOCAL MEMORY, REP DIGGS MADE AN EXTREMELY HELPFUL

IMPRESSION. SYMPATHETIC ATTENTION WITH WHICH HE AND REP COLLINS ADDRESSED THEMSELVES TO RWANDAN WORRIES GENERATED CONSIDERABLE OPTIMISM AMONG RWANDANS OVER OUTLOOK FOR RELATIONS WITH U.S. IN COMING MONTHS. ALL IN ALL, THEIR CONTRIBUTION WAS VERY POSITIVE FROM EMBASSY STANDPOINT.

13. FOR CODEL: HOPE YOU WILL FEEL FREE TO COMMENT, CORRECT, OR ENLARGE UPON ANY OF FOREGOING.
CRIGLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 NOV 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976KIGALI00878
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760431-0890
From: KIGALI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761135/aaaabdxv.tel
Line Count: 178
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION H
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 MAY 2004 by woolflhd>; APPROVED <13 SEP 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RWANDAN PRESIDENT/FONMIN RECEIVE CODEL DIGGS
TAGS: OREP, PFOR, US, RW, (DIGGS, CHARLES C)
To: STATE MAPUTO
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006